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Department of State  
TELEGRAM

CN: 3982

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## ACTION:

SECSTATE WASHDC

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## INFO:

AMEMBASSY BRASILIA  
AMCONSUL RECIFE  
" SAO PAULO  
USCINCSO FOR POLAD6191  
3373  
4950CONSULATE OF THE UNITED STATES  
OF AMERICA

JUN 22 1970

BELEM, PARA, BRAZIL

RIO DE JANEIRO

3982

SUBJECT: TRENDS IN GOB POSITION ON TORTURE

1. EMB NOTES GOB APPARENTLY ADOPTING SOMEWHAT MORE OPEN POSITION ON TORTURE QUESTION IN RECENT WEEKS. AF DEPT AWARE PUBLIC DISCUSSION THIS QUESTION WAS TABOO IN EARLY MONTHS OF MEDICI REGIME. PUBLIC DEBATE BROKE OUT IN LATE APRIL WHEN GOVERNMENT'S REFUTATION SENATOR KENNEDY'S ALLEGATIONS LED TO PUBLICIZED RESPONSE INCLUDING SOME FAIRLY SPECIFIC CHARGES BY MDB REPRESENTATIVES. THIS DEBATE WAS FOLLOWED IN MAY BY MEDICI'S STATEMENT DENYING TORTURE EXISTS IN BRAZIL. UNDAUNTED BY THIS FLAT DENIAL, SAO PAULO LABOR UNIONS FORMALLY REQUESTED MEDICI INVESTIGATE DEATH IN PRISON OF LABOR ACTIVIST HANSEN. THIS DEVELOPMENT WAS REPORTED IN PRESS, AND MENTIONED IN THE FEDERAL CONGRESS. NEXT CAME BRIEF ANNOUNCEMENT IN ESTADO DO SAO PAULO MAY 27 THAT THREE PAULISTA POLICEMEN WHO HAD ALLEGEDLY TORTURED YOUNG PRISONER TO DEATH WERE TO BE TRIED (VICTIM WAS ROBBERY SUSPECT).

## DRAFTED BY:

POL: REJohnson: ael

## DRAFTING DATE

6/10/70

## TEL. EXT.

## APPROVED BY:

POL: REJohnson

## CLEARANCES:

POL/R - Mr. Phillips (in draft)  
USIS - Mr. Evans

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FORM 4-68 PS-412(H)



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WE UNDERSTAND TRIAL HAS JUST BEEN POSTPONED). ON THE SAME DAY BRAZILIAN BISHOPS ISSUED THEIR WIDELY-PUBLICIZED PASTORAL LETTER WHICH INCLUDED A CALL FOR INVESTIGATION OF THE QUESTION OF POLICE BRUTALITIES. ON JUNE 10 ULTIMA HORA REPORTED COURT TESTIMONY OF ACCUSED BANK EMBEZZLER-TERRORIST WHO CLAIMED THAT HIS EARLIER STATEMENT HAD BEEN OBTAINED IN "AN ATMOSPHERE OF BAD TREATMENT AND PHYSICAL AND MENTAL TORTURE." SIMILAR TESTIMONY HAS APPEARED ELSEWHERE IN BRAZIL PRESS ON OTHER OCCASIONS. FINALLY, EMB HAS RECENTLY RECEIVED UNCONFIRMED REPORT (RIO 3902) THAT INTERNATIONAL RED CROSS HAS ALREADY MADE CONTACT HERE WITH MINJUSTICE ON TORTURE QUESTION.

2. PRESSURE ON THE GOVERNMENT ON TORTURE ISSUE HAS THUS BEEN BUILDING UP WITHIN BRAZIL AS WELL AS INTERNATIONALLY. AT SAME TIME, WHILE FORMALLY DENYING EXISTENCE OF POLITICAL IMPRISONMENT OR TORTURE, GOVERNMENT HAS BEEN TOLERATING INCREASING MENTION OF SUBJECT IN BRAZIL PRESS. AS EMBASSY HAS REPORTED (RIO 3739), GOVT HAS ALSO REACTED WITH EQUANIMITY TO BISHOP'S PASTORAL LETTER WITH ITS CALL FOR INVESTIGATION, INDICATING INTEREST IN AVOIDING CONFRONTATION WITH CHURCH ON TORTURE AND RELATED ISSUES.

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